BRITISH COLUMBIA BOARD OF PAROLE

ANNUAL REPORT 1990/91

Province of
British Columbia

92-06501/

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE 3
THE PAROLE PROCESS 5
- Mandate
- The Board
- The Criteria for Parole
- Eligibility
- The Application
- The Hearing

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART 6
BOARD MEMBERSHIP 1990/91 7
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS 9
- B.C. Parole Act Amendment and Regulations
- Directions for Reform in Corrections and Conditional Release
- Day Parole
- Exchange of Services Agreement for Female Federal Offenders
- Native Elders Project

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT 11
- Member Training and Professional Development
- Staff Training and Development

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PAROLING AUTHORITIES .. 13
OPERATIONS 15
- Applications and Decisions
- Parole Supervision
- Suspensions and Revocations

TABLES
- I. Parole Hearing Decisions 16
- II. Parole Applications and Withdrawals 17
- III. Decisions by Corrections Regions 17
- IV. Supervision and Outcome of Parole 18
- V. Suspensions by Month and Disposition 19
- VI. Parole Outcome and Admissions by Sentence Length ... 21

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

The phrase "new beginnings" is an apt description of the British Columbia Parole Board's focus during this first year of a new decade.

In the 1980's the Justice System in Canada was closely examined by a series of committees and commissions, as a result of a wide spread concern for public safety. Concepts such as conditional release were evaluated as to their appropriateness in modern society. The flat sentencing - abolish parole movement, popular in the United States, reported to bring equality to the sentencing of offenders and better protection to the public. However, as the grave flaws of this approach became apparent in the latter half of the decade, interest in this system lessened and Canadians chose to improve, not abandon parole.

Canadian's belief that the object of parole is to protect the public, has allowed the Canadian Parole Boards to enter the 1990's with confidence and energy. In British Columbia this confidence has resulted in the Board's embarking upon a variety of "new beginnings". Some of these beginnings, such as the Native Elder Project, will continue over several years. Others, such as the new member training program, are already operational.

Although improvements and changes in the process of parole are under way, the Board's first priority, protection of the public through the delivery of an effective conditional release program, remains the same.

THE PAROLE PROCESS

MANDATE

The British Columbia Board of Parole is an independent tribunal which contributes to public safety by rendering decisions on applications for conditional release from prisoners in provincial correctional centres.

THE BOARD

The Board is composed of a full time chairman and twenty community members who serve on an as needed basis. The community focus of the Board's membership represents British Columbia's commitment to public participation in the justice process.

THE CRITERIA FOR PAROLE

The Board receives its authority from the Parole Act (Canada) and the Parole Act (British Columbia). The criteria for the granting of parole are contained in these statutes. They are:

1. The inmate has derived the maximum benefit from imprisonment.
2. The reform and rehabilitation of the inmate will be aided by release on parole.
3. The release of the inmate on parole will not constitute an undue risk to society.

ELIGIBILITY

Although the law states that an inmate is eligible to apply for parole after serving one third of their sentence, consideration by the Parole Board is not automatic.

THE APPLICATION

An inmate who wishes to be considered for parole must submit an application to the Board, which contains information such as, proposed employment, means of financial support, treatment plans, and the names of supporting family and friends.

The content of that application is investigated by the Probation Service of the Corrections Branch and an assessment of the inmate's plan is prepared. The institution also prepares a report which evaluates the inmate's participation in programs and progress while incarcerated. Relevant psychiatric and psychological assessments are secured.

Material relating to the applicant's current conviction and criminal and driving history is gathered, and the sentencing judge's remarks are obtained.

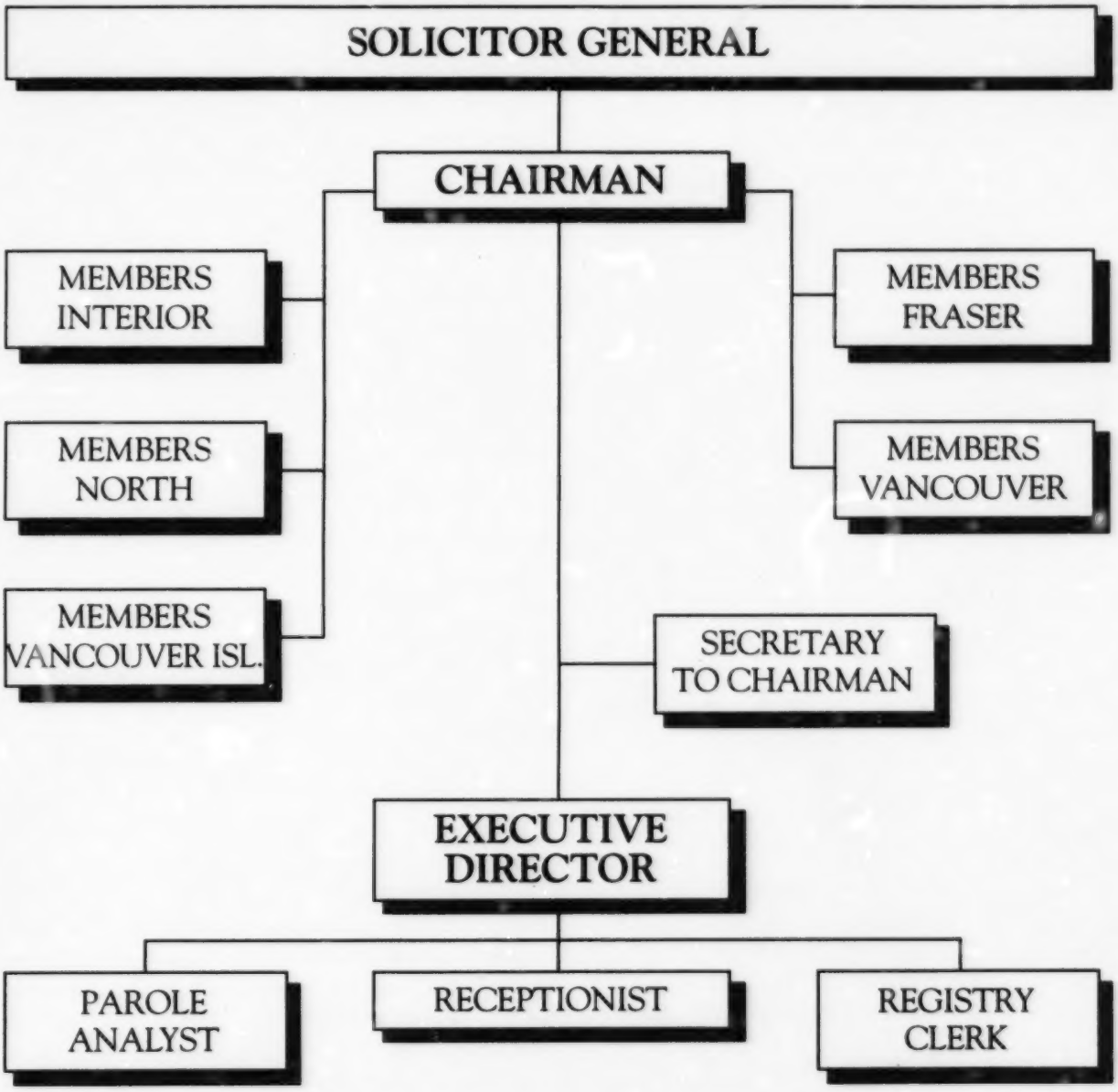
The inmate may obtain letters of support. However, those he/she has victimized may also contribute their views on the appropriateness of parole.

THE HEARING

Parole hearings take place at provincial correctional centres throughout British Columbia. Each case is considered by a panel of two members and the inmate applicant must appear before the Board to answer questions about his/her criminal history, behaviour in custody, participation in institutional programs, and the release plan. The applicant may also be questioned about addiction and offence patterns and required to outline plans for ongoing treatment in the community.

Should the Board decide to grant parole, conditions of residence, mobility, participation in treatment, and reporting are included in the Parole Certificate which is issued. A violation of these conditions will result in a suspension of the parole and an immediate return to custody.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART - B.C. BOARD OF PAROLE



* Policy Executive - Chairman
Executive Director
Parole Analyst
Six Board Members

Staff Incumbents:

Executive Director:	Don Bell
Secretary To Chairman:	Tina Luca
Registry Clerk:	Joyce Hall
Parole Analyst:	Nick Faragher
Receptionist:	Kathy Hansen

BOARD MEMBERSHIP 1990/91

VANCOUVER ISLAND REGION

*Geoffrey Mason	Victoria
Muriel Watts	Courtney
Gordon Hartley	Victoria

VANCOUVER METRO REGION

Virginia Benton	West Vancouver
Susan Knott	Vancouver
Gerry Turner	Coquitlam
*Lyn Greenhill	Richmond
Gordon Mackie	Burnaby
Donald Kennedy	New Westminster

FRASER REGION

*Art Thornhill	Surrey
Dan Griffin	Maple Ridge
Andrew Milne	Langley
*Helen Joe	Chilliwack
John Friesen	Abbotsford

INTERIOR REGION

Dan Kilburn	Kelowna
Muriel Sasakamoose	Kamloops
Al Millhouse	Kamloops

NORTHERN REGION

Ann McCaffray	Prince George
*Catherine Lindseth	Terrace
Lynne McNair	Prince George

*Policy Executive

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

BRITISH COLUMBIA PAROLE ACT AMENDMENT AND REGULATIONS

Two small amendments to the Parole Act were passed by the Legislative Assembly during the 1990 session. The first, to Section 10, clarified the process by which an inmate might request reconsideration of a decision of the Board. The second, to Section 15, added authority to develop regulations in regard to parole eligibility.

Following the passage of the Parole Act amendments, Regulations were drafted. At the conclusion of the fiscal year, the Act and the Regulations were awaiting proclamation.

DIRECTIONS FOR REFORM IN CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE

On July 6, 1990 the Solicitor General and the Minister of Justice of Canada tabled a paper for public consultation entitled **Directions For Reform**, which contained a wide range of proposed changes to sentencing, corrections and conditional release.

Consideration of these proposals and response to them constituted a major project for the British Columbia Parole Board. The Board participated in a Ministry working group with Corrections to prepare a Ministry response. The Board was also able to respond directly to the paper at the Fall 1990 meeting of the Canadian Association of Paroling Authorities.

DAY PAROLE

Following discussions with the Corrections Branch and extensive consultations with community and institutional staff, the Board, in 1990/91 decided to expand the opportunities for inmates to apply for Day Parole and to increase the flexibility of the program.

Previously, Day Parole had only been available to inmates who did not have access to a Community Correctional Centre. However, with a decrease in C.C.C. beds, an alternate method of controlled community reentry could be accomplished using Day Parole. Thus, the Board amended its policy accordingly.

The lack of flexibility in the Day Parole program had been a concern of Board members. In order to address this issue, the Board amended its policy to allow for the continuation of Day Parole beyond Full Parole eligibility.

EXCHANGE OF SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR FEMALE FEDERAL OFFENDERS

In 1985, British Columbia and Canada entered into an agreement to jointly build a new correctional centre for women in British Columbia, which would hold women sentenced to both provincial and federal prison terms.

As this centre neared completion, the Board became a member of a joint implementation team to develop programs and policies which would meet the standards of both governments and the needs of professionals and inmates.

In the 1990 Exchange of Services Agreement, British Columbia committed to provide all community services for federally sentenced women. In order to facilitate this agreement, the British Columbia Parole Board agreed to set the conditions for Mandatory Supervision of federal offenders and approve Temporary Absence programs for those sentenced to terms of longer than five years.

NATIVE ELDERS PROJECT

During the previous fiscal year, the Board participated in consultations with native groups in British Columbia. As a result of those meetings, the Board's Executive Director and two native Board members have, this year, begun to explore the role native elders might play, in parole, to assist in the successful reentry of offenders into the native community. They have had several meetings with elders and are working to develop one or more concrete models for elder participation in the parole process.

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

MEMBER TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

During fiscal 1990/91 the Board developed a new orientation program for members. The idea to change and update the initial training came from the Board's Policy Executive, and the curriculum was developed and taught by a former Board member.

The program was extended in length to five days, allowing for topics to be covered in more depth. As the instructor was a former Board member, the material was presented from a community member's point of view. The course was delivered to a group of new members in October 1990 and was enthusiastically received.

General professional development of Board members occurred at the Board's Spring and Fall meetings. During the Spring meeting the Office of the Ombudsman made a presentation, and the members were given an overview of the new Burnaby Correctional Centre for Women. The members were also able to tour the almost complete facility.

The Fall meeting of the Board took place in Chilliwack and overlapped the annual training session for the institutional staff who coordinate parole hearings. The opportunity for Board members and the Corrections Branch to exchange views had been a high priority request of both groups.

In addition, the Board and the coordinators were invited to spend a day in a Sto:lo Longhouse. Several members of the Longhouse gave presentations to the Board on topics ranging from native spirituality to the meaning and traditions of the Sto:lo people and the Longhouse in their community.

STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Staff members of the Board participated in several training opportunities during 1990/91. As the Board was added to new computer systems, staff received training in a variety of areas, including computerized accounts payable, the Probation Records System and operation of the Boards own records system.

The Chairman and the Executive Director also participated in a media skills workshop.

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PAROLING AUTHORITIES

The Canadian Association of Paroling Authorities is a working group comprised of the four Canadian Parole Boards. As the Parole Act (Canada) contains the authority for the federal and provincial governments to appoint Parole Boards in addition to the powers of those Boards, conditional release in Canada is similar in all parts of the country.

Three provinces, British Columbia, Quebec and Ontario have chosen to establish Parole Boards to deal with prisoners in provincial correctional centres. The National Parole Board deals with offenders in Canadian penitentiaries and provincially sentenced offenders in the remaining seven provinces and two territories.

Although there are four Paroling Authorities in Canada, the powers and parole programs of these Boards are all consistent with the Parole Act (Canada). The four Boards have Transfer of Jurisdiction Agreements between them, which allows applicants and parolees to reside in any part of the country.

As Paroling Authorities in Canada are united by statute, agreement, and case law, C.A.P.A. provides a valuable form to ensure program consistency and issue sharing.

During 1990/91, C.A.P.A. met on two occasions and its members participated in a major international conference on parole held in Toronto. The annual conference of the International Association of Paroling Authorities, jointly hosted by the Governments of Canada and Ontario, brought together Parole Boards and parole practitioners from the United States, Canada, Great Britain, France and other countries. Learning how conditional release is administered in other jurisdictions was a unique experience for the British Columbia Board, as the program of parole in Canada is quite different from parole in other countries.

OPERATIONS

APPLICATIONS AND DECISIONS

The number of parole applications in 1990/91 decreased by 5.3% from 1321 to 1254. However, as the number of persons sentenced to terms long enough to make an application for parole decreased from 3,325 to 3087 (7.7%), a larger percentage of the inmate population elected to apply for a conditional release (Table VI).

The rate of parole grants also increased in this fiscal year rising to 60.1% from 57.9% in 1989/90. The percentage of inmates who withdrew their application for parole decreased from 234 to 222, which represents the same withdrawal rate 17.7% as in the previous year (Table II).

Although the largest number of hearings continue in the Fraser Region of Corrections, 541, this represents a decrease of 93 hearings, 17.1% (Table III). In the Vancouver Metro Region of Corrections, the number of parole hearings rose by 20.1% from 104 to 125. Another significant increase occurred in the North Region, where the increase was 16.1%, 186 to 216 hearings. There were only small changes in the Interior Region and the Vancouver Island Region.

PAROLE SUPERVISION

The number of paroles successfully completed during 1990/91 increased from 579 to 611. The percentage of successful completion was 85.79%. The average number on parole each month was 344.92 (Table IV).

SUSPENSIONS AND REVOCATIONS

Although the number of parole suspensions increased to 167 from 153 in the previous year (Table V), the number of revocations decreased and the number of reinstatements increased significantly. The increase in reinstatements may reflect the improvement in communication between Board Members and Parole Supervisors. A second factor may be a decision in the Supreme Court of Canada dealing with parole suspensions and revocations which criticized Parole Boards for being too arbitrary in dealing with minor infractions.

TABLE I

PAROLE HEARING DECISIONS

Fiscal Year 1990/91 (1989/90)

MONTH	GRANT	DENY	REVOKE	DEFER	OTHER*	HEARINGS	GRANT RATE
April	58 (55)	40 (43)	10 (7)	4 (1)	5 (4)	117 (110)	59.2% (56.1)
May	60 (59)	39 (45)	5 (10)	6 (3)	4 (6)	114 (120)	60.6% (58.4)
June	71 (64)	42 (35)	9 (7)	5 (3)	6 (3)	133 (112)	62.8% (64.6)
July	60 (56)	50 (35)	6 (14)	7 (2)	6 (8)	129 (115)	54.5% (61.5)
August	65 (54)	45 (36)	11 (9)	4 (2)	5 (8)	130 (109)	59.1% (60.0)
September	36 (46)	33 (41)	5 (9)	6 (6)	5 (3)	85 (105)	52.2% (52.9)
October	35 (50)	34 (50)	15 (8)	3 (5)	0 (3)	87 (116)	50.7% (50.0)
November	45 (42)	27 (31)	8 (12)	5 (6)	2 (3)	87 (94)	62.5% (57.5)
December	58 (48)	26 (47)	12 (14)	4 (7)	5 (1)	105 (117)	69.0% (50.5)
January	45 (53)	30 (35)	8 (15)	3 (5)	11 (4)	97 (112)	60.0% (62.2)
February	57 (53)	30 (27)	5 (10)	0 (2)	6 (6)	98 (98)	65.5% (66.3)
March	46 (49)	27 (36)	7 (9)	1 (5)	7 (11)	88 (110)	63.0% (57.6)
Totals	**636 (629)**	**423 (458)**	**101 (124)**	**48 (47)**	**62 (60)**	**1270 (1318)**	**60.1% (57.9)**

* Transfers, Changes of Conditions, Reinstatements

TABLE II

PAROLE APPLICATIONS AND WITHDRAWALS

YEAR	PAROLE APPLICATIONS	PAROLE DECISIONS	WITHDRAWALS	WITHDRAWAL RATE
1988/89	1380	1174	206	14.9%
1989/90	1321	1087	234	17.7%
1990/91	1254	1032	222	17.7%

TABLE III

NUMBER AND TYPE OF DECISIONS BY CORRECTIONS REGIONS

Fiscal Year 1990/91 (1989/90)

	GRANT	DENY	DEFER	REVOKE	OTHER	TOTAL
Interior	82 (102)	72 (64)	2 (3)	18 (17)	3 (3)	177 (189)
North	115 (95)	62 (65)	12 (4)	17 (15)	10 (7)	216 (186)
Fraser	256 (279)	195 (242)	23 (23)	36 (59)	31 (31)	541 (634)
Vancouver Metro	72 (57)	29 (33)	3 (2)	10 (5)	11 (7)	125 (104)
Vancouver Island	111 (96)	65 (54)	8 (15)	20 (28)	7 (12)	211 (205)
Totals (1318)	**636 (629)**	**423 (458)**	**48 (47)**	**101 (124)**	**62 (60)**	**1270**

TABLE IV

SUPERVISION AND OUTCOME OF PAROLE

Fiscal 1990/91

MONTH	UNDER SUPERVISION	REVOKED	COMPLETED SUCCESSFULLY
April	320	10	62
May	345	5	53
June	352	9	55
July	363	6	42
August	375	11	59
September	348	5	46
October	367	15	55
November	343	8	57
December	328	12	48
January	315	8	49
February	347	5	38
March	336	7	46
Totals	**4139**	**101**	**610**
Percent Successful Completion		**85.79%**	
Monthly Average Under Supervision		**344.92**	

TABLE V

SUSPENSIONS BY MONTH AND DISPOSITION

Fiscal Year 1990/91 (1989/90)

MONTH	SUSPENSIONS	REVOKE	DISPOSITION REINSTATE	OTHER*
April	8 (12)	6 (9)	2 (1)	0 (2)
May	18 (7)	11 (6)	3 (1)	4 (0)
June	14 (16)	8 (12)	4 (3)	2 (1)
July	17 (12)	12 (9)	4 (3)	1 (0)
August	9 (11)	5 (7)	2 (2)	2 (1)
September	18 (12)	14 (10)	2 (2)	2 (1)
October	16 (15)	12 (11)	0 (3)	4 (1)
November	11 (18)	9 (14)	1 (2)	1 (2)
December	11 (14)	5 (8)	5 (2)	1 (4)
January	13 (14)	8 (10)	5 (4)	0 (0)
February	16 (11)	7 (9)	9 (2)	0 (0)
March	16 (11)	12 (8)	4 (0)	0 (3)
Totals	**167 (153)**	**109 (113)**	**41 (25)**	**17 (15)**

*Transferred to another jurisdiction under suspension
Sentence expired under suspension
Parole terminated

PAROLE OUTCOME BY SENTENCE LENGTH

(1990/91)

SENTENCE (DAYS)	APPL'D	GRANT	DENY	W'DRAW
61-93	46	21	14	11
94-184	371	182	99	90
185-273	157	85	45	27
274-366	237	123	90	24
367-732	297	146	102	49
733-	34	15	16	3
Reapplications	**112**	**55**	**39**	**18**
Totals	**1254**	**627**	**405**	**222**

ADMISSIONS BY SENTENCE LENGTH

SENTENCE (DAYS)	NUMBER SENTENCED (1990/90)	(1989/90)
61-93	1087	1137
94-184	1060	1122
185-273	282	311
274-366	274	353
367-732	338	356
733-	46*	46*
Totals	**3087**	**3325**

*Approximate number of federally sentenced inmates in provincial correctional centres

TABLE VI